

System of education in Poland

Bożena Ciesielska

Szkoła Podstawowa w Żabnicy

Obligatory education.

Compulsory education obligation in Poland is fulfilled by attending primary and lower secondary schools. Compulsory education starts at the beginning of the school year, in which the student becomes six years old (6) and continues until graduation from a lower secondary school (usually at the age of 15).

- **Obligatory schooling** (imposed by the Constitution) **lasts until the person is 18 years old**. This can be achieved by attending one of several options: a public or non-public upper secondary school; extracurricular classes in accredited public and non-public institutions; classes carried out as a part of educational activities provided by legal and natural persons; or vocational training with an employer.

Pre and primary school education.

Kindergartens -for children between 3 and 5 years old.

The preparatory group in Poland called „Class 0” can be organized either in kindergartens or in primary schools

Primary School:

Students are between 6/7 and 12/13 years old. It is divided into 2 steps (3 years each):

1. Classes I-III (integrated teaching – first step)
2. Classes IV-VI (second step)

General rules.

- Classes I-III: (18 compulsory lesson per week)
 - all classes are provided by one teacher who is a class teacher
 - teacher can decide about the time of the lessons (does not have to provide 45 minutes lessons)
 - pupils are also taught religious education and English language
- Classes IV–VI: (24 compulsory lessons per week)
 - subjects are taught by variety of teachers (students change classes for subjects)
 - there is one teacher who is the class teacher

The subjects obliged for pupils:

1. Polish language
2. Modern foreign language

3. Maths
4. Science
5. Music
6. Art
7. Technical Education
8. Physical Education
9. Religious Education (not obligatory-individual decision of the parent or student over 18 years old.)

After finishing primary school pupils take a test in April. The test is equal for an every pupil. Children with special needs can take a test on a special sheet. The result does not decide on finishing the school.

Lower secondary school (gymnasium).

This type of school has existed since 1999. Students are between 12/13 and 15/16 years old.

There are following subjects:

1. 1. Polish language
2. History
3. Society knowledge
4. Fine art
5. Music
6. Foreign language
7. Maths
8. Physics with Astronomy
9. Chemistry
10. Biology
11. Geography
12. Information Technology
13. Craft
14. Physical Education
15. Religious Education (not obligatory-individual decision of the parent or student over 18 years old.)

Upper secondary schools.

The basic criterion for admittance to all schools at upper secondary level is completion of the lower secondary school. These schools are not obligatory

- 3-year general secondary school – providing general education, leading to secondary school- leaving certificate
- 3-year profiled general secondary school - providing general education and offering tuition in individual general vocational profiles, leading to secondary school-leaving certificate ;
- 4-year technical secondary school- awarding a vocational qualification diploma. It offers full-time technical and vocational education for students aged 15/16 to 19/20.

Furthermore, secondary school-leaving certificate can be obtained after completion of the fourth grade of the school.

- 3-year supplementary technical secondary school– awarding a vocational qualification diploma, leading up to a matura, for basic vocational school leavers. It offers full or part time vocational education;
- 2-3 year basic vocational school - awarding a vocational qualification diploma, for students aged 16 to 18/19;
- 2,5 year post-secondary schools- awarding a vocational qualification diploma for graduates from general secondary schools (starting their operation in 2005);
- 3-year special schools preparing for work for pupils mentally or physically handicapped – awarding a certificate confirming preparation for work.

Higher education- tertiary education.

Graduates from upper – secondary schools possessing Matura leaving certificate have variety of educational possibilities at the level of tertiary education.

Universities and other high schools give 2 degrees:

- Bachelor degree (after 3 years)
- Master degree (after next 2 years)

Universities, technical universities, agricultural schools, schools of economics, pedagogical academies, medical academies, academies for physical education, schools of arts, schools of theology.

Programme of studies can take the form of daily, evening, extramural studies or distant learning courses.

In the Polish system of education for the Master's degree holders who wish to obtain the Ph.D., there is a possibility to pursue a doctoral studies of 3 years' duration.

Grading system. Usual grading system in primary and secondary schools:

- 6 – excellent,
- 5- very good,
- 4 – good,
- 3- satisfactory,
- 2 – mediocre,
- 1- unsatisfactory (fail)

Often „+' or „-'” are added to the principal scale. Usual grading system used by higher education institutions:

- 5 – very good,
- 4- good,
- 3 – satisfactory,
- 2 – unsatisfactory (fail)

Who is in charge of education in Poland?

National level.

Education policy is formulated and implemented centrally by the Ministry of National Education. The Minister for National Education, by means of regulations and detailed

arrangements, creates a legal framework for the functioning of all educational establishments, including vocational education and training. The Minister for National Education cooperates with Ministers from other branches supervising vocational schools: the Minister for Culture and National Heritage (artistic schools), the Minister for Agriculture (agricultural schools), and the Minister for Environment (forestry schools).

District level.

The district authorities and their heads are in charge of upper secondary education **(including vocational education)**, post-secondary schools and special schools (primary and secondary), sports schools and schools of sports mastery, practical and continuing education centres, psychological and pedagogical centres. **At regional and district levels, regional and district employment boards take actions to achieve full employment in the region, evaluate the management of the labour fund, submit applications, and give opinions on VET.**

Local level

In Poland, the local level is the municipality. All kindergartens, primary schools and lower secondary schools (gymnasium) are run by local governments.

In enterprises, social partner involvement in vocational education is mostly through either the organisation of practical training or of work placements for vocational education students, based on agreements concluded between employers and particular schools.